

FIONA STAPLES
BRIAN K. VAUGHAN

CHAPTER
THIRTY

Saga™

HotComic.net

CHAPTER
THIRTY

Saga

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Every relationship is
an education.



Each new person we
welcome into our hearts is
a chance to evolve into
something radically different
than we used to be.



But what happens
when those people
disappear from our lives?



Marko!

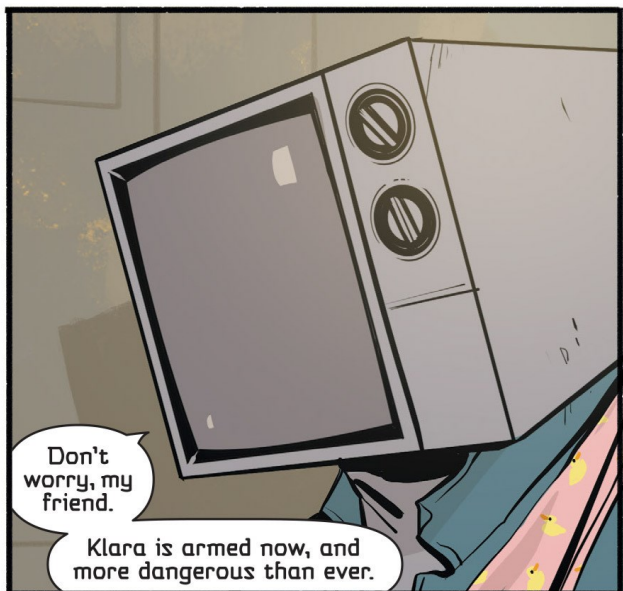
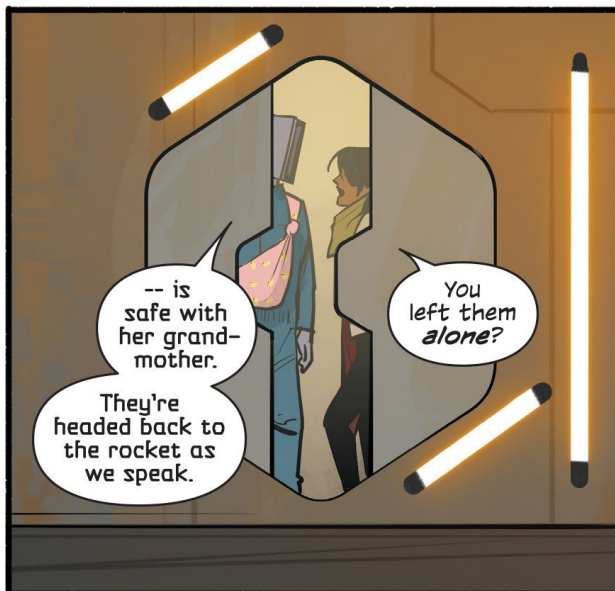
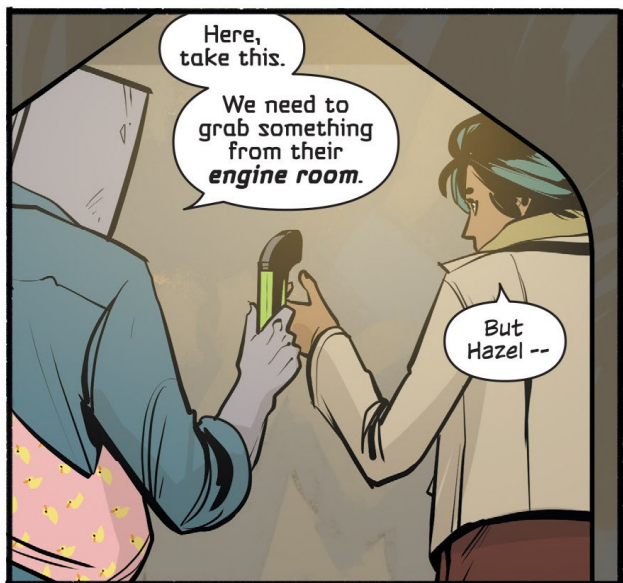
Are you
alive?



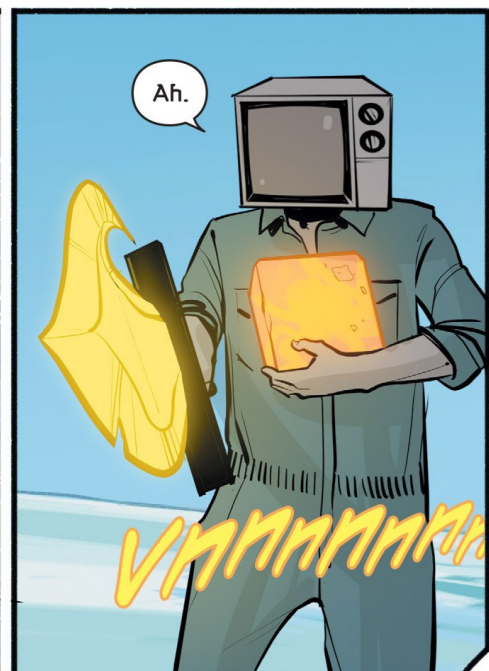
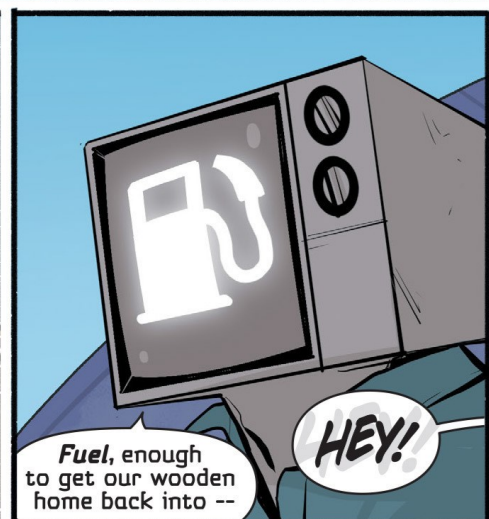
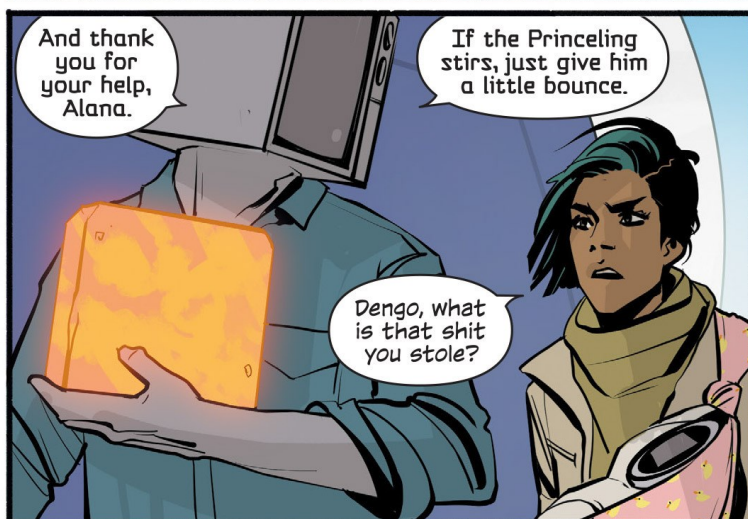
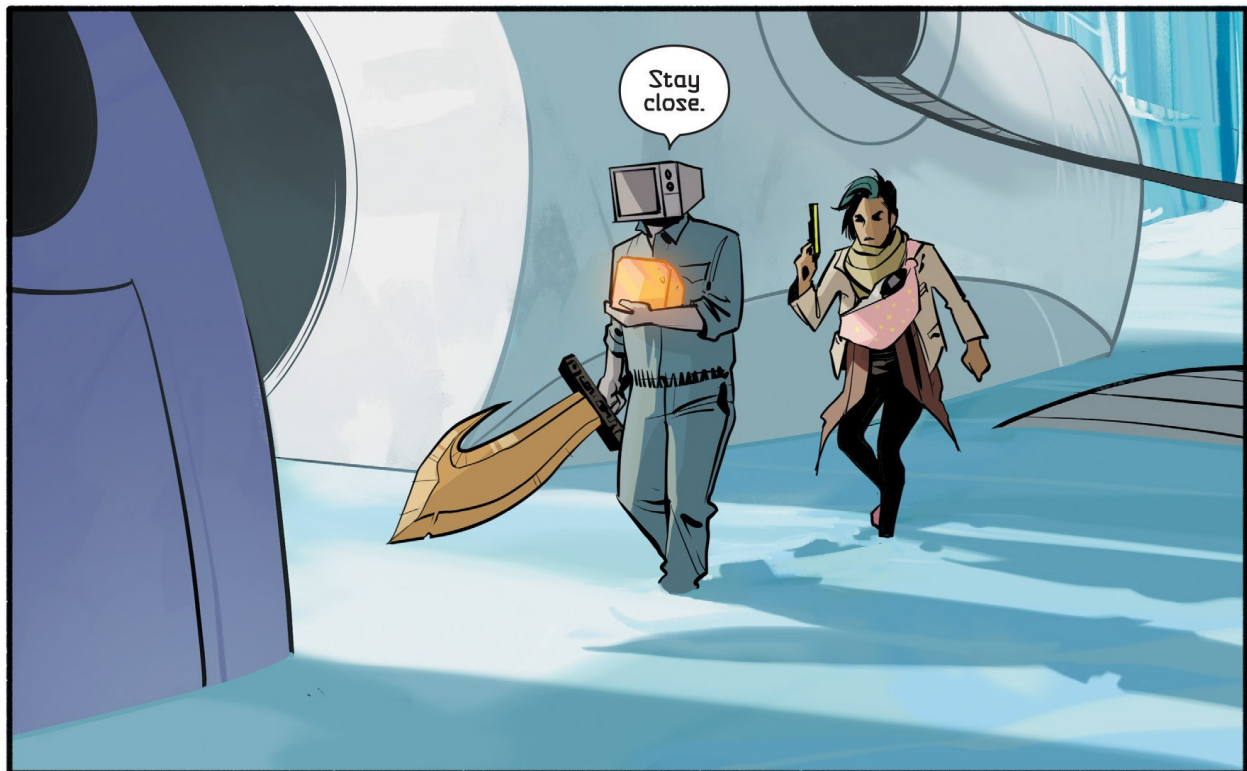


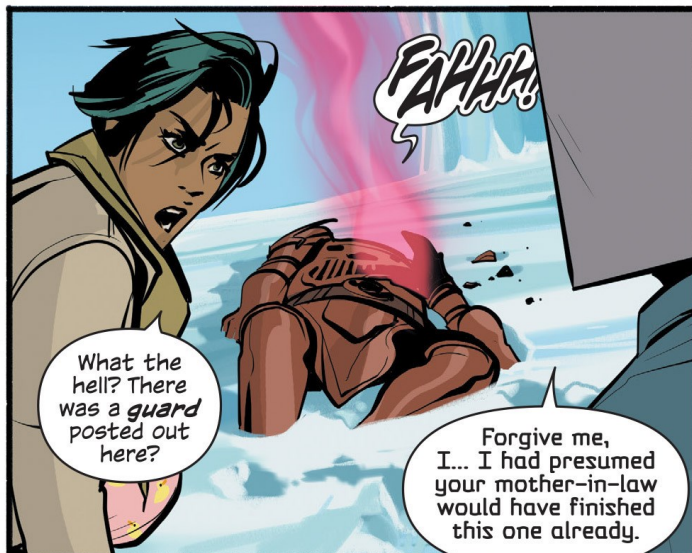
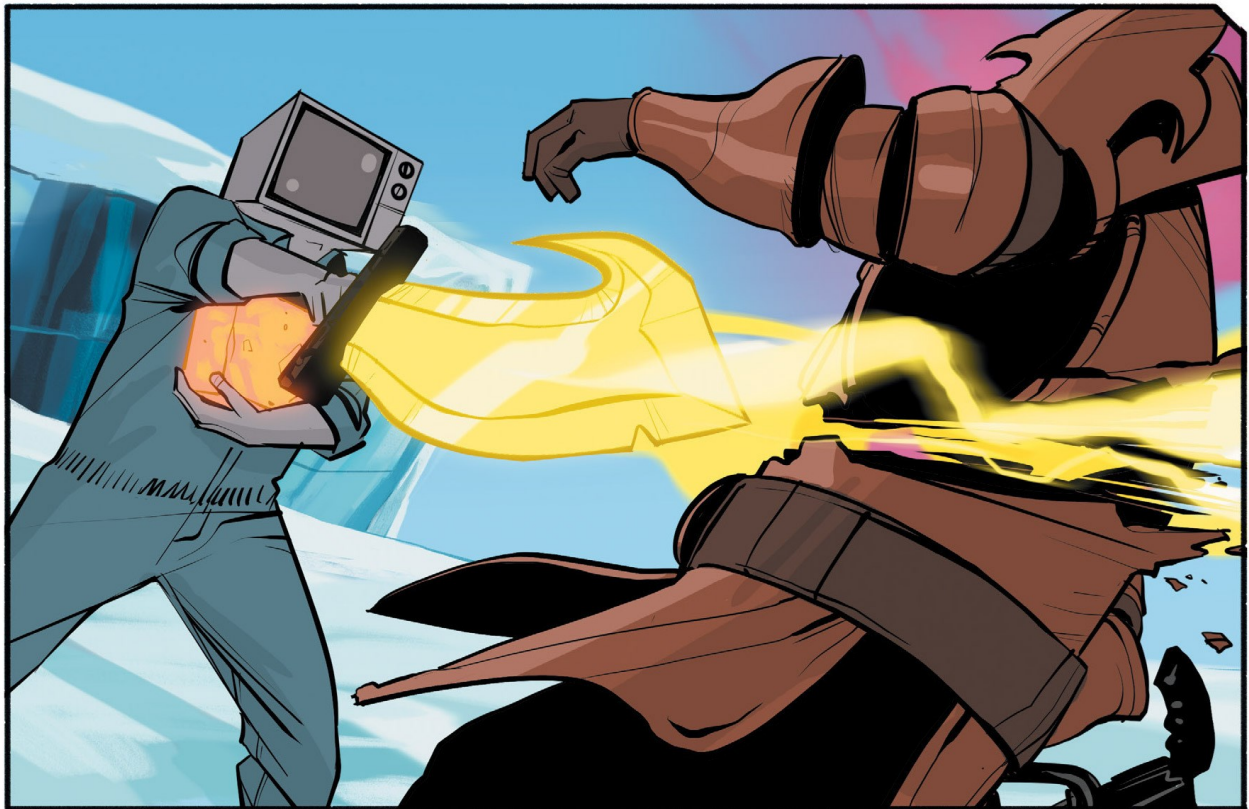


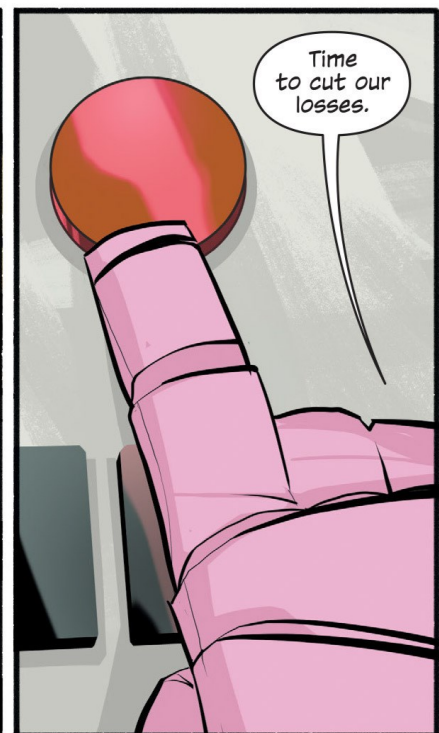


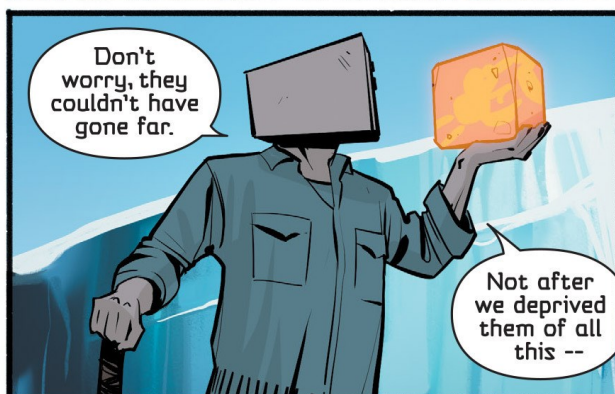


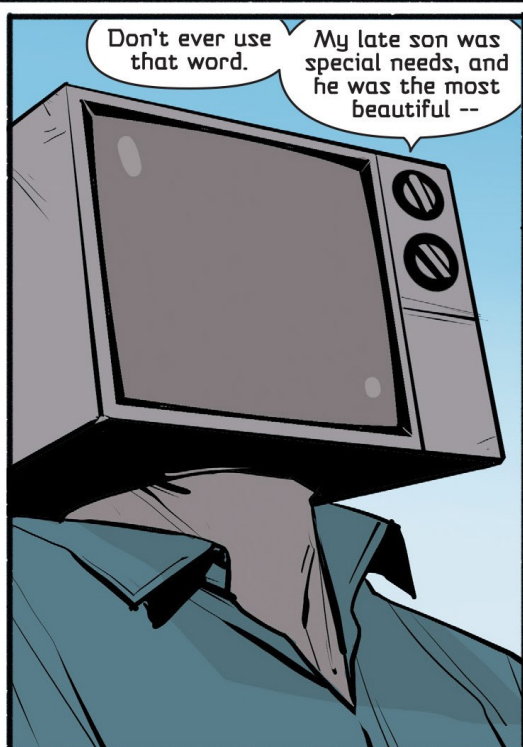








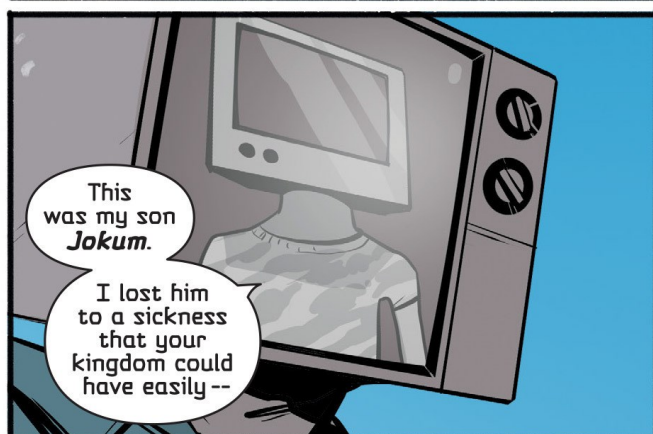
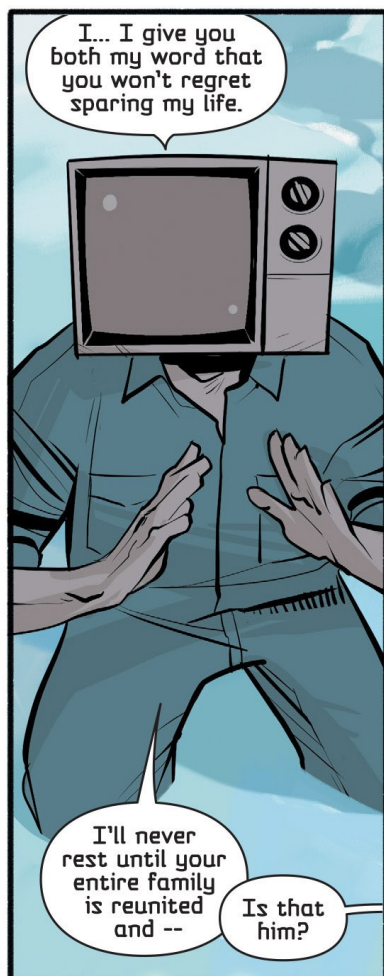




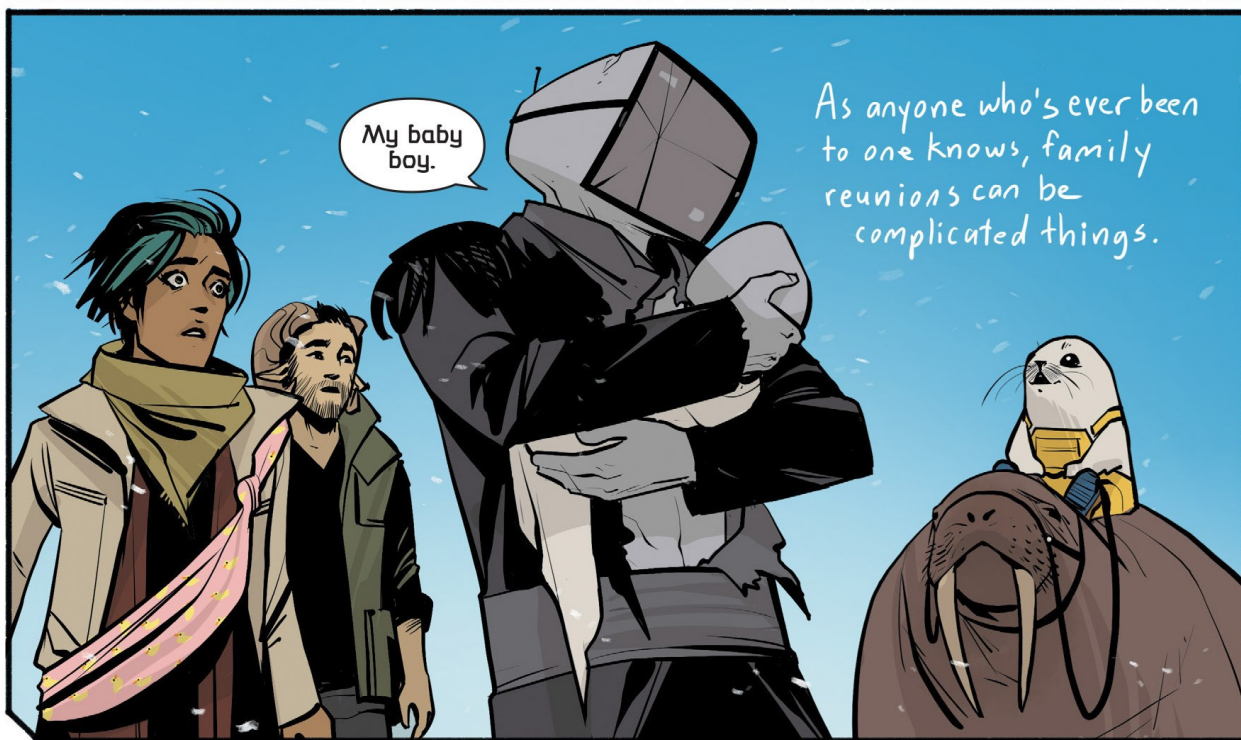
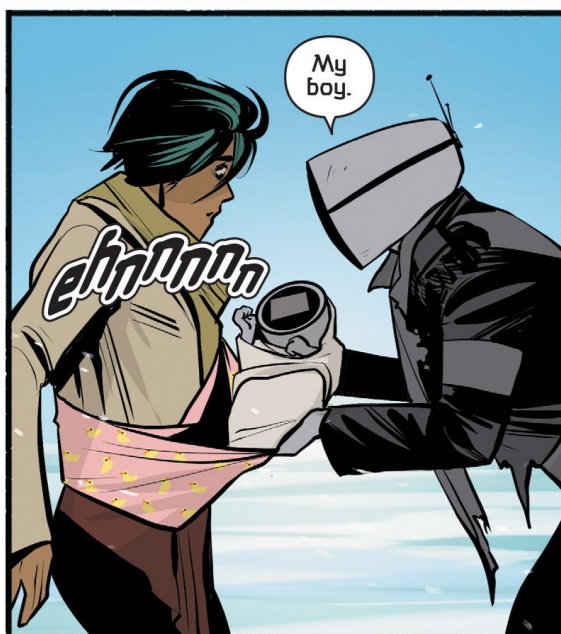
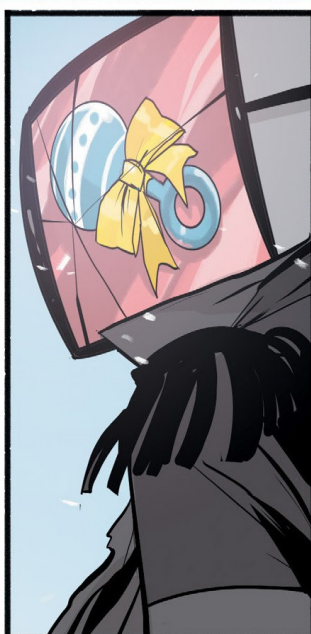


But that's
not who we
are.

There's no graduating from this kind of
education, couples just keep growing and
changing until they either break up or die.











It's been a rough few years.



What ->koff- what do you have there?

A gift from your ex's family.

They were hoping you could use this piece of The Stalk's old ship to hunt down her killer and --



Hold up.

That's *The Brand's* dog, ain't it?



We wanted to wait until you were stronger to tell you...

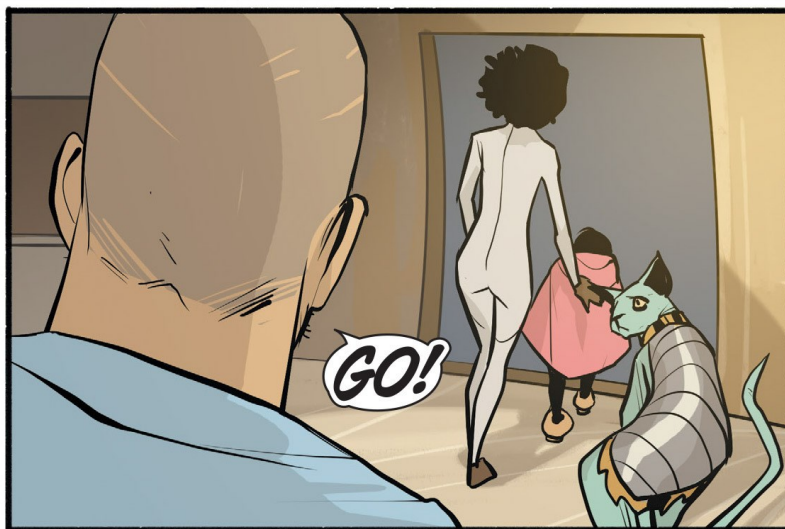
I'm so sorry, The Will.

It should have been *me*, not her.

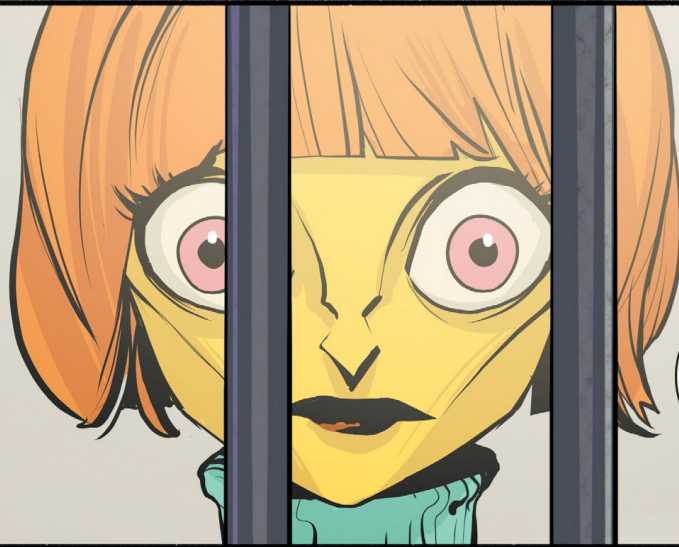


What are you...?

My sister is *dead*?



Back in those days, I was lucky enough to have other stuff on my mind.



One at the gate, coming inside!



Running a little late today, Noreen.

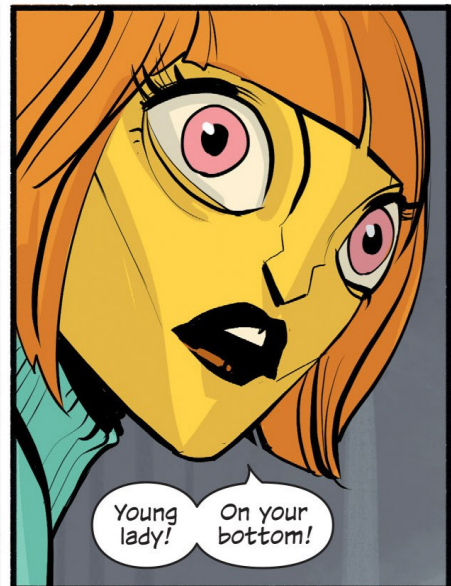
You out partying all night?

Grow up, Private.



All right, everyone, let's form a circle.

Bonvolu fari rondon.



Young lady!

On your bottom!



It was time I started
my own education.

TO BE CONTINUED

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I know, it's kind of a lot to digest.

Thankfully, you'll have some time to do just that. I can't believe it, but after another six chapters and 138 pages of full-color Staples resplendence, we've reached our FIFTH regularly scheduled hiatus, affectionately known by very few as the Vacationanza!

As always, Fiona, Fonografiks and I greatly appreciate you folks supporting/enduring this occasionally torturous publishing schedule, since it not only gives us time to make the series our best, but also allows us to occasionally have creative and life experiences outside of *Saga*... experiences that usually end up somehow also contributing to this series. Regardless, we love you best.

And just in case you're ever despondent/mildly bored while waiting for us to return with Chapter Thirty-one, I'm proud to present an all-new edition of the **SAGA HIATUS SURVIVAL GUIDE**:

1. REREAD OLD SAGA A handsome new collection of this very arc will be out in just a few weeks, so be sure to "flip" your individual issues and use some of the profits to replace them with a bookshelf-ready copy of *Saga Volume Five*. And if you're curious about where our series is headed next, now's a great time to revisit previous volumes, as some of our heroes will finally be embarking on an important adventure that Hazel hinted at somewhere in her narration a long, long time ago.

2. BUY NEW SAGA CRAP We've heard your requests and/or seen the weird bootleg lying Cat shirts you've been trying to sell online. We get it, you want some official *Saga* merch. Well, I'm happy to report that Fiona and I have finally decided to become proper sellouts, though not on our own, as we've been talking with Image and Robert Kirkman's Skybound Entertainment about helping us bring you guys some absurdly cool *Saga*-related shirts, toys and other weird surprises later this year. Plan your annual budget accordingly.

At the time of this writing, I'm not yet sure if Skybound will have anything ready by the 2015 San Diego Comic-Con (which both Fiona and I regrettably will not be attending this year), but why not swing by their booth and bother them anyway?

3. BUILD A RELIGIOUS SHRINE TO FIONA STAPLES How does one honor thirty consecutive issues of stunning art from the most talented, hardest working person in comics? With a proper at-home monument of worship, that's how. I recommend utilizing images from Fiona's current work with Mark Waid on *Archie*, as well as her recent variant cover for issue #11 of Image's excellent *The Wicked + The Divine*.

You can less creepily commune with @FionaStaples through Twitter, Tumblr and Facebook, or head over to www.essentialsequential.com

for more of her limited-edition prints, including Fiona's majestic wraparound cover of the whole cast from Chapter Twenty-five.

4. BRING BKV GIN AND CONTRABAND Wasn't I supposed to have gone back into hiding? By the time this issue comes out, I'll have just returned from visiting Vancouver to help promote the U.S. vs. Canada military thriller *We Stand On Guard* with co-creator Steve Skroce. Our conflict-drenched second issue will be out from Image Comics in just a few weeks.

I also stopped by Image Expo in San Francisco to announce that *The Private Eye*, the sci-fi mystery with artist Marcos Martin about a future where everyone has a secret identity, will finally be making the leap from its digital home at PanelSyndicate.com to a snazzy new HARDCOVER EDITION from Image Comics this November.

Marcos and I never planned to do a print version of this story, but when Robert Kirkman begged us for the publishing rights, we told him that Image could have *The Private Eye*... once our site was allowed to have *The Walking Dead*. Sadly for me, Robert called our bluff and said that we had a deal, so now I suddenly have to write a fucking zombie story that will be appearing exclusively at PanelSyndicate.com later this year. Oh well, at least it will be cool to see Marcos' work in black and white.

Seriously, I'm extremely grateful that Kirkman and Charlie Adlard are trusting Marcos and me to tell what I think will be a very surprising story in their world. I'm obviously crazy about Image and hope to always make print comics with them, but I'm also really dedicated to this ongoing pay-what-you-want concept that Marcos created with PanelSyndicate.com. So even if you've been patiently waiting for an old-school paper version to finally check out *The Private Eye* this November, I hope you'll consider checking out the digital site where it was born when our special *Walking Dead* standalone story goes live that same month.

Where was I...? Right, future appearances! In September, I'll be flying to England for the NICE Comic Convention in Bedford, where I'll hopefully be meeting up with my old friend and *Pride Of Baghdad* co-creator Niko Henrichon. By the way, if you miss Niko's extraordinary painted artwork and haven't yet picked up his *Noah* graphic novel from Image, please order it this second. I've said before that I think Darren Aronofsky's movie was one of the most underrated "fantasy" films of recent years, but I love this comic adaptation they did even more.

Also in attendance at that show will be Goran Parlov and Goran Sudžuka, two wildly talented artists that Pia Guerra, José Marzán, Jr. and I were occasionally lucky enough to collaborate with on *Y: The Last Man*, a series that our friends at Vertigo have just started releasing in their gorgeous Absolute

Format, by the way. The first new hardcover that just came out this month features my long-lost original pre-9/11 draft of the script for *Y #1*, which was surreal to read almost fourteen years later.

Finally, and most importantly for me, in October, I'll be headed to New York City to meet up with Cliff Chiang at the 2015 New York Comic-Con to sign copies of our new Image Comics ongoing series *PAPER GIRLS*, which we've included a cryptic preview of at the end of this very issue.

Set in the year 1988, *Paper Girls* is a mysterious young adult adventure about four 12-year-old newspaper delivery girls from the suburbs of Cleveland who stumble onto the most important story of all time. It's both the weirdest and the most personal thing I've ever written, and I have no idea if it's going to connect with anyone.

But I hope it might appeal to some readers of *Runaways*, my old Marvel series with Adrian Alphona, and the art by Cliff and colorist Matt Wilson makes me cry every time I look at it, so there's that. Plus, letters are by my old *Ex Machina* collaborator and fellow "K." enthusiast Jared K. Fletcher!

Anyway, I plan to do a few more signings in NYC and elsewhere over the next few months to help promote these books that so many of my friends have been slaving away on for so long, but I don't have more details at the moment, and I'm not on any kind of social media... so if you have additional questions about my upcoming whereabouts, I guess drop me a letter?

5. BUY OTHER COMICS FROM THE REST OF THE SAGA FAMILY

Not only is Fonografiks lending his talents to *We Stand On Guard*, he's also doing spectacular design and lettering work on a bunch of other Image titles, including *They're Not Like Us*, written by our own Eric Stephenson, and the outstanding new *Injection* from Warren Ellis and Declan Shalvey. Top-of-the-pile reads, all of them.

6. TAKE THE BUZZFEED "WHICH SAGA CHARACTER ARE YOU?" QUIZ

For the record, Fiona Staples got Marko, and her boyfriend, fellow artist supreme Ben Rankel, got Alana. My wife and I both got Klara, and our mothers-in-law both got Prince Robot IV. This all makes a lot of sense. Well played, BuzzFeed staff member Jada Young.

7. GO SEE THE MOVIE EX MACHINA

I had nothing to with this, and it has nothing to do with the comic of the same name that I did with Tony Harris... but it's still my favorite movie of the year. Beautifully written science fiction with terrific performances. Genuinely unpredictable.

Follow these simple marching orders and our hiatus should whiz by like you're in hypersleep. For now, let's tackle a few of your letters before we blast out of here...

Dear Bri-Fi,

I would like to complain about Saga, because you asked for it. Issues #3, 4, 14, 16, 19, 20, 22, 26, and 28 all have the Saga logo on the bottom half of the cover. I understand the urge to mix it up now and then, but this is like every third issue! It makes it difficult to find sometimes for me, as the comics shop I go to displays it in a spinner rack. I worry that I might miss an issue and that makes me lose sleep.

I should keep better track, but I am a retired cobbler on

several prescription drugs, so I have a lot on my mind. This led me to buying a second copy of #24 by mistake. Yeah, I know the logo was on top—I'm dumb. But that issue had the great splash page with Lying Cat, so I carefully took the superfluous issue apart, and used the printer to double that page in size to make a nifty poster. I recycled the rest of the comic. Fiona's splash pages and cover should go in a museum someday.

Scratch Hamburger's belly for me,

Mike A.

Richmond, VA

Mike, I'm already hoping that "Bri-Fi" will catch on as much as Fiona is hoping it won't. Thanks for the thoughtful complaint, and sorry about your accidental second purchase. Unfortunately, some of those covers with the logo at the bottom are my favorites, so I don't know how to address your totally valid concerns. Instead, I'll just attempt to bribe you back into our good graces by sending you a copy of our Deluxe Hardcover. Hope it helps.

Dear Fiona and BKV,

So does Hamburger actually pick the letters or what? I spent money to send this.

Love,

Neil Lalonde

Calgary, Alberta

Neil, if a human picked these letters, do you really think you would have gotten through?

But Hamburger thanks you for the Garbage Pail Kids card.

Dear Brian and Fiona,

Several issues ago, you asked about motorcycle advice. This is something I know nothing about, as one of my personal mottos is "never ride on anything with two wheels or four legs." However, I have often read the write-ups that PLAYBOY does on new motorcycle models and technologies. And since you seem to enjoy encouraging people to rip up printed materials, I have included the latest motorcycle article from the May issue of PLAYBOY. Please note that I am happily married and nothing untoward has been done with these pages. My wife and I both read the articles AND look at the pictures, just like we do with Saga.

Thank you for keeping us always entertained and please continue the good work,

Tim + Laura W.

San Diego, CA

Tim and Laura, from his seat in the Saga sidecar, Hamburger K. Vaughan has named YOU co-winners of this month's bushwa from the Almighty Prize Drawer: an envelope purloined from the Chateau Marmont, my temporary membership card to the Whitney Museum of American Art, and a semi-recent Cracker Jack prize. Congratulations to you both, and thanks for the damaged periodical fragments.

That's all for this arc, but have a restful rest of your summer, everyone, because [beat; then hard on dramatic score] KINDERGARTEN. IS. COMING.

Your friend,

Brian



Paper Girls

VAUGHAN • CHIANG • WILSON

OCTOBER 2015

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Cool
costume,



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